



NEW CHALLENGES FOR THE EURO INFO CENTRE NETWORK

IN THIS NUMBER

*New Challenges for the
Euro-Info Centre
Network* p. 1



*SUB-CONTRACTING:
The IBEX Inverted Trade
Shows* p. 2



*COMMUNITY SME
INITIATIVE: Aid for SMEs
in Sweden and Spain* p. 4



INTERPRISE p. 5



*CONCERTED ACTION
N° 3: Increasing the
Visibility and
Effectiveness of Support
Services for SMEs* p. 6



*EUROPEAN
CONFERENCE ON THE
CRAFT SECTOR AND
SMALL ENTERPRISES:
Second Preparatory
Conference on Enterprise
Financing* p. 7

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are capable of playing a considerable role on the European market in terms of growth and employment. In order to assist SMEs face up to these new challenges and to encourage them to exploit better the potential benefits of the single market, the 7th Annual EURO INFO CENTRE (EIC) Conference was held in Brussels on 20-21 September 1996 to explore two basic themes: **the future of the EIC network** — as defined under the third multi-annual programme for SMEs in the European Union, and under the renewed Integrated Programme in favour of SMEs — and the implementation of **the Euro**.

The future multi-annual programme will have far reaching effects on the operation of the EICs and on the bodies which support them. Their mission as information and counselling centres will be enlarged and they will become 'first-stop shops', that is, access points for all programmes and actions drawn up in favour of SMEs in the EU. During this conference the main partners of the European Commission put forth their views with regard to future inter-network cooperation, indicating what had already been accomplished and outlining the problems still in need of resolving. Following this positive message, working groups examined in detail a series of questions on how to strengthen relations with the other services of the Commission and the partnership with local service providers (chambers of commerce, professional organisations) while examining the issue of improving the quality of the network. It became clear from these discussions that while all are agreed on the need to improve the quality of the EICs and to work more effectively with other networks and bodies, there is also an urgent need to continue identifying and disseminating existing 'good practice'.

The implementation of the Euro, the conference's second topic, was the subject of serious debate. The EICs' information activities on this subject will form part of the information campaigns foreseen by the Commission. Seven working groups discussed

the effects which implementing the single currency will have on SMEs; the assistance to be given them upon introduction and use of the single currency; and their participation in promotional campaigns.

The annual conference gives EICs a chance to organise their effective support for the development of Community policies in favour of SMEs. It helps to strengthen the network effect which the EICs depend on in order to provide enterprises with the best services and targeted information. In addition to the plenary sessions and the working groups, some 40 other meetings — not counting informal encounters — allowed the EICs to discuss common projects. Other than the representatives of the entire EIC network, of the European Commission and other EU institutions, the annual conference also brought together leaders from professional and sectoral federations and associations as well as from Belgian political and economic circles.

For further information: EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DG XXIII/B1
Jean-Pierre HABER
rue de la Loi, 200 (AN80)
B-1049 BRUSSELS
Tel: +32-2/295.05.38
Fax: +32-2/295.73.35

SUB-CONTRACTING: The IBEX Inverted Trade Shows

The IBEX (International Buyers' Exhibitions) Inverted Trade Shows have been developed by DG XXIII in the framework of Community actions drawn up under its enterprise policy in response to a request by the European Council¹.

What is an IBEX Show? An IBEX inverted trade Show organises pre-arranged meetings between large enterprises and SMEs on an international scale. These meetings are set up according to the precise, and often confidential, needs of the large enterprises and the specific capability of the SME to respond to them.

An IBEX show is organised within a specific strategic sector (eg automobile, agro-food stuff, textile, etc) and targets either clearly identified needs or a precise range of enterprises (eg high technology SMEs, craft sector, young enterprises, etc). On the one hand, it aims to aid large enterprises in their search internationally for partner SMEs to cover specific cooperation needs and, on the other, to promote relations between large enterprises and SMEs by providing the latter with opportunities to establish direct contacts with large enterprises interested in their products, services or know-how.

By means of this methodology, relations between SMEs and large enterprises are optimised in terms of both quality and interest. Through its format it offers participants savings in terms of time and money vis-à-vis traditional sub-contracting trade shows.

An inverted trade show project which meets the Commission's criteria for the IBEX label may be eligible for technical and/or financial support.

- *Financial support* is granted based on the presentation of a dossier which follows a specific methodology and meets precise conditions as to content and form. Directorate-General XXIII can grant financial support of up to 25% of a project's total cost, up to a maximum 100,000 ECU. This ceiling may be raised to 150,000 ECU when a project is co-financed in conjunction with other community policies.

Similarly, when IBEX trade shows are organised in regions eligible for Structural Funds (Objectives 1, 6, 2 and 5b) and set up exclusively for SMEs from these regions (but without restriction as to the large enterprises participating), such IBEX shows (then known as IBEX IC-SME) are eligible for Commission support within the regional policy framework. In this instance, Directorate-General XVI may grant financial support of a maximum 50% of total costs for an IBEX inverted trade show

¹ Council Resolution of 22.11.1993 — OJEC C 326 of 03.12.1993

organised in an objective 1 or 6 region (or up to 75% in exceptional circumstances, such as for Member States involved in cohesion funds) and up to 30% for an event in an objective 2 or 5b region. In such cases, requests for support should be addressed to DG XVI.

- *Technical support* is geared primarily to advise on how to organise the preparation, running and follow-up of the inverted trade show. It is also aimed at activating the information and cooperation networks of DG XXIII according to well defined-needs. Technical support from the Commission can be obtained as early as the pre-project stage of the IBEX inverted trade show, thus facilitating an awareness of the importance of the tasks required for organising such an event, as well as of the show's component parts which can be adapted according to the needs of a particular IBEX.

The preparation of an IBEX inverted trade show should *follow a precise time-table* (submitted to the European Commission with the application for support) and it should *follow several stages*:

1. Identification of international partners. These partners will help the main organiser in analysing the timeliness and the interest in organising the IBEX inverted trade show which will be established principally by means of a survey of the large enterprises and SMEs likely to participate.
2. Identification of and contact with large enterprise who express their precise needs.
3. Wide dissemination of the event aimed at SMEs and registration of SMEs.

Selection of SMEs according to the announced criteria.

5. Comparison of the offers from SMEs and the demands from large enterprises and the drafting of a list of meetings.
6. Realisation of the IBEX and a simultaneous assessment survey.
7. Submission of the final report to the European Commission accompanied by the survey results.
8. Ex-post' assessment and submission to the Commission within three months.

To receive support for organising an IBEX inverted trade show, application should be made to Directorate-General XXIII or XVI, preferably at least 12 months prior to the event. It is therefore necessary to apply each year before April 1st for shows taking place in the first half of the following year, and before October 1st for inverted trade shows planned for the second semester of the following year.

- *To help the organiser of an inverted trade show* wishing to obtain support from the European Commission under the IBEX label, the Commission has prepared a VADE-MECUM which is available from the following addresses:
 - for the organisation of inverted trade shows *within the framework of enterprise policy*, contact DG XXIII — Enterprise Policy — Fax: +32-2/296.75.58;
 - for the organisation of inverted trade shows *in objectives 1, 6, 2 and 5b regions*, contact DG XVI — Regional and cohesion policy — Fax: +32-2/296.32.73 or consult DG XVI's World Wide Web site on the internet: <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg16/guide/guidehome.htm>.

IBEX (International Buyers' Exhibitions) INVERTED TRADE SHOWS

Already held: VETIS (automobile sector) in Turin, 15-18 November 1994; EUROCONTRACT (multi-sectoral), in Brussels, 5-6 October 1995; ELMIA (multi-sectoral) in Jönköping, Sweden, 14-16 November 1995.

Forthcomming Events

MET: in Strasbourg, FRANCE, 17-18 October 1996

Sector: high technology (computing-robotics; telecommunication and detection; measuring and assays; optics and optronics; electronics and micro-electronics; mechanics and physics of fluids; chemical-energy-propulsion; structural materials; simulation; safety).

Objective: Promote direct contact (pre-arranged meetings) between 500 selected high technology SMEs and 50 large industrial groups with a view to finding areas of cooperation in clearly defined technological fields. During these 2 days, certain SMEs will also be able to meet amongst themselves with regard to possible partnerships.

Organisation: Comité Richelieu — Bruno ACCETTONE — Philippe GRELARD — avenue du Général Leclerc — F-92100 BOULOGNE — France — Tel: +33.1.48.25.99.44 — Fax: +33.1.48.25.99.02.

VETIS: in Turin, ITALY, 19-22 November 1996

Sector: automobile industry (metallurgy, chemical and organic matters, motors, mechanics and chassis, body and interior fitting, electrical and electronic equipment, design, etc).

Objective: promote lasting partnership relations between buyers from the most important automobile manufacturers and outfitters, and automobile component parts suppliers. The selected suppliers of component parts will offer their products, know-how and services directly to the buyers during the pre-arranged meetings agreed on by the buyers.

Organisation: EXPO 2000 — Via Nizza 294 — I-10126 TURIN — Italy — Tel: +39-11/664.43.04 — Fax: +39-11/664.42.70.

AEROMART: in Toulouse, FRANCE, 11, 12, 13 December 1996

Sector: aeronautical industry (aeroplanes, motors, electronic systems, aerospace, aeroplane outfitting, miscellaneous materials, environment, etc).

Objective: to allow 200 selected sub-contractors — in accordance with very precise requests from principles in the aeronautical industry sector — to present their products and know-how to some one hundred large enterprises during direct contacts (pre-arranged meetings) to which the buyers have given their prior consent. Meetings between sub-contractors are also foreseen in order to establish partnerships in the technical, commercial or financial fields.

Organisation: ADHESION & ASSOCIES — 9 rue de l'Ancienne Mairie — F-92771 BOULOGNE Cedex — France — Tel: +33.1.41.86.41.86 — Fax: +33.1.46.03.86.26.

COMMUNITY SME INITIATIVE: Aid for SMEs in Sweden and Spain

IN SWEDEN:

Under the Community SME Initiative², the European Commission has unblocked 17 million ECU of the European Union Structural Funds to strengthen the competitiveness of Swedish SMEs located in rural regions with scarce population and in industrial decline. The Swedish authorities will add another 17 million ECU to the sum granted by the Commission. this initiative is designed to encourage the private sector to invest a contribution of 14 million ECU, thus creating a total estimated investment of 48 million ECU. The resources allocated under this programme will be concentrated in three priority areas:

- actions aimed at promoting the connection to national and international networks, in order to allow small enterprises (less than 50 employees) access to European markets.
- measures aimed at making new technologies more accessible to the smallest enterprises. Special attention will be given to the use of information technologies in SMEs.
- actions aimed at assisting SMEs in bringing their production and transformation techniques into line with the most rigorous environment standards.

² OJ C 180 of 01.07.1994

Applications for support should be addressed to the Minister of Industry and Commerce — Mrs Karin Larsson — S-10333 Stockholm — Sweden — Tel: +46.8.405.10.00.

In addition, under the Community initiative KONVER (economic reconversion of regions heavily involved in the defense industry), the municipalities of Karlskoga and Karlsborg will receive an aid package of 3.3 million ECU from the Structural Funds — to which the Swedish authorities will add another 3.3 million ECU and the private sector 4.7 million ECU. These funds are essentially aimed at promoting the creation of new enterprises, developing trade and industry (including tourism) and the training of managers and employees of SMEs.

Applications for support should be addressed to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce — KONVER Programme — S-10333 Stockholm — Sweden — Tel: +46.8.405.10.00 — Fax: +46.411.36.16

IN SPAIN:

Under the Community SME initiative, the European Commission has granted an aid package of 251.10 million ECU from the Structural Funds to improve the competitiveness of Spanish SMEs and to promote their adaptation to the single market. This Community aid will be added to 121.5 million ECU from national public financing and to 1.01 billion ECU from private sources for a total investment of 1.4 billion ECU. The programme includes the following measures: aid to investments, provision of services to SMEs, creation or development of capital risk funds. In concrete terms, the aid will support cooperation between SMEs, will promote access to information systems, to databases and to networks of technological and commercial innovation, will encourage investments and improvements in product quality. Aids to enterprises are of three types: aids to investments, subsidies on interests rates, and subsidies on Mutual Guarantee Society insurance premiums.

Applications for support should be addressed to the Instituto de la Pequeña y Mediana Empresa Industrial (IMPI) — Sr D SANTIAGO ELORZA — Paseo de la Castellana, 141 — E-28046 MADRID — Spain — Tel: +34-1-582-93.02 — Fax: +34-1-582-93.99.

For further information: DG XXIII/C1
Anne-Marie FIQUET
rue de la Loi, 200 (AN80)
B-1049 BRUSSELS
Fax: +32-2/296.47.84

INTERPRISE:

Promoting Partnership between Industries and/or Services in Europe

The INTERPRISE programme is designed to support local, regional and national actions aimed at stimulating direct contacts (ie personalised meetings) between heads enterprises with a view towards establishing cooperation agreements between small and medium-sized enterprises. The projects must include at least three regions from three European Union countries and may, in certain instances, also be extended to regions from non-member countries.

The following INTERPRISES events will take place in the coming mail ³:

INTERPRISE ENTEC

Meetings: 21-22 October 1996 in Dessau, Germany

Countries involved: Germany, Austria, Czech and Slovak Republics, Denmark, Finland, The Netherlands, Sweden, Slovenia

Sectors: technologies and services in the environmental sector

Organisation: EIC MAGDEBURG — Heinz-Dieter DÖMLAND — Bahnhofstrasse 49A — Postfach 1568 — D-3010 MAGDEBURG — Tel.: +49-391-561.91.61 — Fax: +49-391-561.91.62.

³ See EURO INFO 92 and 93

INTERPRISE ELECTROMEETING 1996

Meetings: 21-22 October 1996 in Vincenza, Italy

Countries involved: Italy, Austria, Germany, Croatia, Slovenia

Sectors: electronics and electrical construction

Organisation: Associazione degli industriali della Provincia di Vicenza — Lorenzo MAGGIO — Piazza Castello, 3 — I-36100 — VICENZA — Tel.: +39-444-23.25.80 — Fax: +39-444-23.26.86.

INTERPRISE AGRO-ALIMENTAIRE

Meetings: 15 November 1995 in Madrid, Spain

Countries involved: Belgium, Spain, France, Italy, Portugal

Sectors: agro-food stuff

Organisation: EURODEVELOPPEMENT GEIE — Danielle CARON — rue de Stassart, 32 — B-1050 BRUXELLES (Belgium) — Tel.: +32-2-548.22.11 — Fax: +32-2-511.90.74.

INTERPRISE LEBENSMITTEL

Meetings: 21-22 November 1996 in Linz, Austria

Countries involved: Austria, Czech and Slovak Republics, Germany, France, Italy.

Sectors: food and beverage

Organisation: EIC — Wirtschaftskammer Oberösterreich — Mag. Thomas DENK — Hessenplatz, 3 — A-4010 LINZ — Austria — Tel.: +43-732-7800-375 — Fax: +43-732-7800-587.

INTERPRISE INFODESK

Meetings: 22 November 1996 in Frankfurt, Germany

Countries involved: Germany, Spain, France, United Kingdom, Italy, The Netherlands

Sectors: publicity, management and public relations, consulting

Organisation: Industrie- und Handelskammer Frankfurt am Main — Heinz KREMP — Börsenplatz, 4 — D-60313 FRANKFURT — Tel.: +49-69.21.97.216 — Fax: +49-69.21.97-541.

For further information on a specific INTERPRISE event, please contact the organiser.

For information on the INTERPRISE programme itself: European Commission — DG XXIII/B2 — INTERPRISE — rue de la Loi, 200 (AN80) — B-1049 Brussels — Fax: +32-2/295.17.40

CONCERTED ACTION N° 3:

Increasing the Visibility and Effectiveness of Support Services for SMEs

This Forum, to be held in **Dublin on 18-19 November 1996**, is designed to increase awareness of national, regional and local initiatives aimed at creating or developing support services for enterprises and to identify the mechanisms which will encourage SMEs to take advantage of them⁴. This Forum is open to representatives of public authorities, to intermediaries and to entrepreneurs themselves, and is designed to provide the best information on the best conditions for adjusting the offer of services to the real needs of SMEs, but also to increase the visibility and effectiveness of the measures to be taken in the field by means of a better dialogue and adequate communication between the entrepreneur and the different support services.

- **18 November 1996:** plenary meeting under the presidency of Mr John M. Horgan, Analog Devices BV, Irelande.

Speakers: Mr Richard BRUTON TD, Minister for Enterprise and Employment of Ireland; Mr Christos PAPOUTSIS, Member of the European Commission responsible for SMEs.

⁴ See EURO INFO 92 — July/August 1996

The Visibility of Support Services for SMEs:

Speech by Mr Pierluigi BERSANI, Minister for Industry, Trade and Craft, Italy; by Mr Jean-Pierre RAF-FARIN, Minister for SMEs, Trade and Craft (France) and by Mr Heinrich L. KOLB, State Secretary for Economic Affairs (Germany).

This plenary meeting will be closed by Mrs Mary ROBINSON, President of Ireland.

The afternoon of 18 December will be dedicated to sessions in workshops:

Workshop 1: Recent trends regarding public measures or programmes at national and/or regional level.

Workshop 2: Recent trends regarding measures or programmes offered by intermediary bodies

Workshop 3: Experiences and strategies regarding the visibility of the support services supply for enterprises

- **19 November 1996: the plenary meeting** will begin with a presentation of the reports from the workshops, followed by a discussion between all the participants in the Forum and a panel of European figures representing SMEs. The conclusions of Forum will be presented by Mr Richard BRUTON, Minister for Enterprise and Employment of Ireland.

For further information: EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DG XXIII/C1

Jocelyne GAUDIN

rue de la Loi, 200 (AN80)

B-1049 BRUSSELS

Tel: +32-2/295.09.76

Fax: +32-2/296.62.78

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON THE CRAFT SECTOR AND SMALL ENTERPRISES:

Second Preparatory Conference on Enterprise Financing

Within the framework of colloquiums in preparation for the Third European Conference on the Craft Sector and Small Enterprises, Forbairt, in collaboration with the Irish Minister of Enterprise and Employment, is organising an conference entitled: 'Financing Enterprising during their Entire Existence'. Based on the fact that access to financing is the key to enterprise development, the event will cover the following topics:

- bank loans, the main source of financing;
- payment periods and their effect on enterprise liquidity;
- sources of financing other than loans (risk capital, etc);
- new governmental and European programmes aimed at improving the financial situation of enterprises.

The conference will be held in Dublin, Ireland, on 5-6 December 1996.

To register:

Forbairt — Mrs K. FITZGERALD

35-39 Shelbourne Road

Ballsbridge

Dublin 4 — Ireland

Tel: +353-1-609.21.26

Fax: +353-1-660.50.19

E-mail: fitzgeraldk@forbairt.ie

For further information: DG XXIII/A4

Craft Sector

Oliver LOEBEL

rue de la Loi, 200 (AN80)

B-1049 BRUSSELS

Tel: +32-2/295.22.79

Fax: +32-2/295.45.90

E-mail: oliver.loebel@dg23.cec.be

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

AT THE ZAVENTEM AIRPORT FORUM (Brussels): Become Acquainted with the Activities of DG XXIII in Favour of SMEs and the Craft Sector

Located in the facilities of the new national airport of Zaventem (arrivals), the 'Airport Forum — Business Welcome Services' offers heads of enterprises and businessmen leaving or transiting Brussels an attractive 'business' space equipped with telephones, fax, photocopiers, staff, personalised reception, availability of hostesses, chauffeurs, private office corner, etc. DG XXIII has a stand in this particularly well designed reception area which, coupled with a telephone link to the information service of DG XXIII in Brussels, will provide interested persons with rapid access to information on the actions and programmes drawn up by DG XXIII in the framework of its enterprise policy: EURO INFO CENTRES, EUROPARTENARIAT, INTERPRISE, BC-Net, BRE, actions in favour of sub-contraction, concerted actions in favour of the craft sector, the social economy, trade and tourism. The 'Airport Forum' is open from 6:00 am to 9:00 pm, seven days a week.

For further information: DG XXIII — Carmelo CALAMIA — rue de la Loi, 200 (AN80) — B-1049 BRUSSELS — Fax: +32-2/299.27.69 — E-mail: carmelo.calamia@dg23.cec.be

EURO INFO and many other sources of information are available on the INTERNET via the EUROPA server:

<http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg23.htm>

- * EURO INFO is a newsletter for small businesses and craft trades. It is distributed free of charge to business organisations, associations and groups and to correspondents of the Business Cooperation Centre (BRE) to members of the BC-NET (Business Cooperation Network) and to EURO INFO CENTRES and to SME executives who request a copy. EURO-Info appears 10 times per year.
- * The information contained in this bulletin maybe reproduced, provided that acknowledgment of the source is made. This publication is written in a journalistic style and is not a faithful translation of the legal texts to which it refers. The elements discussed in the current EURO INFO are purely for information purposes.
- * EURO-Info is at your service. Tell us about yourselves.
For further information or suggestions:
Directorate General XXIII Enterprise Policy, Trade, Tourism and Cooperatives — Euro-Info — Paola PICCAROLO — Rue de la Loi 200 (AN 80), B — 1049 BRUSSELS — Tél.: +32-2/296.19.04 / 299.13.06 — Fax: +32-2/299.27.69.